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School Committee Minutes 03/13/2007

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2007
7:30 PM

Present: Sue Sheffler, Chair
Susan Lovelace, Vice Chair
Paul Schlichtman, Secretary
Sean Garballey
Jeff Thielman
Martin Thrope
Kathy Fennelly

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt.: Kevin Hutchinson
Chief Financial Off: Sue Mazzarella
Sp. Ed. Director: Barbara Cataldo
Student Reps: Sean Conroy and Ella Hartenian

Call to order: 7:30 pm

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Garballey it was
Voted to extend the rules of Public Participation
Roll Call: 4-3 Motion Fails Mr. Thrope yes, Mr. Garballey yes, Ms. Fennelly No, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Schlichtman No, Ms. Lovelace No,
Ms. Sheffler No

Mr. Schlichtman's motion to adjourn the meeting for fifteen minutes failed for lack of a second.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Robert McWatters a junior at AHS made a statement of his disapproval of the system of school rank that is being changed.

With the School Committee Room filled to capacity, with mostly Ottoson staff as well as former School Committee members, Board of Selectmen, parents and students of Arlington, Mr. Greco, who was representing the faculty of the Ottoson Middle School made a lengthy declaration regarding the erosion of the middle school philosophy. Mr. Greco also stated after learning of Supt. Levenson decision not to renew Principal Stavroula Bouris contract the Ottoson Staff met that afternoon and voted unanimously for a vote of confidence for our Principal Stavroula Bouris and unanimously vote of no confidence for Supt. Levenson.

Mr. Thrope has asked Madam Chair to continue to extend Public Participation for Ms. Mahon to address the committee.

Ms. Mahon thanked the committee for letting Public Participation continue beyond the required time and noted that the Board of Selectmen have been inundated with phone calls and emails regarding the communities acute disappointment with the non renewal of Principal Stavroula Bouris contract. Ms. Mahon respectfully asked the School Committee to have Supt Levenson reconsider this decision.

CONSENT AGENDA – all items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.
*Approval of Warrant 07119 in the amount of \$296,223.86

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

MASC REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Koocher, Executive Director of Massachusetts Association of School Committees came tonight to address the Arlington School Committee to explain the different roles and responsibilities of the Arlington School Committee as they relate to certain issues at hand. The hiring, contracting and retention of any employee in the school department, with very limited exception, is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools. The Role of School Committee is limited and has no authority to substitute its judgment for the superintendents in personnel matters. Critical issues of confidentiality are at stake, when you discuss in public certain personal information issues their rights of privacy can be grossly violated.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Supt. Levenson repeated what Mr. Koocher stated that there is many topics and a lot of details he cannot discuss and his comments are limited. Supt. Levenson made a statement that the decision not to renew Principal Bouris contract was a very difficult one and realized he has hurt Principal Bouris, and the staff and this decision is one that was made with much thought and not made out of the blue. Supt. Levenson also stated that he has no problem with the middle school model. Supt. Levenson said he is asked to make decisions based on all aspects of the Principals job, some are visible and some are less visible. This decision is driven by one thing trying to move the district forward while helping 4,500 children achieve to their fullest potential. Supt. Levenson repeated that he cannot go into detail and that his discussion was made a while ago, much forethought, and this decision is final.

Mr. Thrope made a statement of his own thoughts and observations of Supt. Levenson experiences working here in Arlington. The statement is attached.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Garballey it was

Voted to move No Confidence in Superintendent Levenson

Roll Call: 5-2 Mr. Thrope yes, Mr. Garballey yes, Ms. Fennelly No, Mr. Thielman No, Mr. Schlichtman No, Ms. Lovelace No, Ms. Sheffler No

NURSING UPDATE

Ms. Lucille Nicholson, Supervisor of Nurses, gave a Nursing Update presentation with additional data from other Committee Members, Pat Hassett, Nurse at the Ottoson, Susan Lovelace, SC member, Susan Mazarella, CFO, Cindy Starks, a parent. The data showed that the growing public sense is that a school is, in part, a health-care provider. School Nurses help students monitor and control their health conditions. The additional duties of the School Nurse were addressed and it was noted that a nurse is present in each school building for least 3 hours a day and there is always a school nurse on call to provide urgent care. Everything is documented and the nurses are the masters of student's records. Training continues to be encouraged so more staff can be trained in CPR. AYCC has interns in place in all the elementary schools both special education and regular education students are serviced. In a school year over 36,452 students visited the school nurse and 34,237 students were returned to the classroom. They hope to have every school equipped with an EAD machine. Ms. Nicholson recommended that software packages be researched to support the needs of the nursing department and help to creating electronic records for students.

MATH, ELA INTERVENTION

Mr. Hutchinson briefly reviewed grade 6-12 intervention focus for students who we need to provide support to who are not learning. Ms. Frangos, English Director spoke about the different Tiers of Intervention available for students. The Ottoson grade 7-8 students in the LL program get an additional 240 minutes per week on ELA writing and reading instruction. At AHS grade 9 and 10 ELA attend Literacy Lab 2-3 periods per 7-day cycle. The Literacy Lab is equipped with new computers, student files, array of graphic organizers and all text materials markers, and supplies. Mr. Skidmore spoke of the students who have failed MCAS and have participated in the Literacy Lab and re-take rate for those served is successful. The curriculum goal is to develop the reader's and writer's capacity & academic access.

Ms. Bodie made a presentation on the Math Intervention at Ottoson Middle School and Arlington High School. Currently at the Ottoson Middle School, we have 2 teachers serving 125 students for 2-3 periods per week per student. The three elements of intervention are SuccessMaker tutorial, pre-teach skills, and MCAS review on Open Response questions. The improvements are assessed by teacher observation and assessment as well as individual SuccessMaker assessment. At AHS currently we have a .2 teacher with 17 students for 2 periods per week per student. At the High School the classes are small and we look at all students in C2 level Math class or Academic Support. The intervention is similar to language arts, building confidence; focusing on organization, attitude, and skills. MCAS performance will determine the improvement assessment. At present there is no formal intervention at the elementary level.

BREAK

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION*

Administrative structure

Nate Levenson,

**Postponed To Future School Committee Meeting*

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT***Nate Levenson****At Risk Youth Conference***** Postponed To Future School Committee Meeting****SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Lovelace summarized the Budget Survey Results and noted that 622 participated in the Survey and these results are one of the many pieces of making budget decisions. The survey summary will soon be posted to the Arlington Web.

On a motion by Mr. Garballey seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Voted to move to amend the 11:00 rule to whatever time anyone, who would still like to participate in the Public Participation, may do so provided they abide by the three minutes time limit. So we can hear from anybody who has waited to speak to the committee.

Vote 7 – 0 unanimous

Policies and Procedures

Mr. Garballey presented The Admission of Nonresident students JFAB with the added policy change for a First Reading. A brief discussion emerged on the Japanese Foreign exchange program and the ASA program and the two different Visa types; J1 Foreign Exchange Student Visa vs. F-1 Student Visa. The second reading will take place at the first meeting in April.

Mr. Garballey reminded the committee of the next Policy and Procedure meeting on March 21, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.

Community Relations

Mr. Schlichtman spoke about the Subcommittee meeting discussion on the Peirce Cell Antenna that was held last month at the Peirce School and the technical and fiscal questions that were raised will be referred to the Budget Subcommittee and Policy and Procedure subcommittee and continue discussion will follow in April.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mr. Thielman it was

Voted to move to refer the Peirce Cell Antenna to Budget Subcommittee and report back by the first meeting in April

Vote 7 – 0 unanimous

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Schlichtman referenced a letter regarding the Peirce Cell Antenna and many correspondences from the Ottoson situation.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Doyle, a parent of a ninth grade student, made a statement of praise for Principal Stavroula Bouris and stated she was confused and asked why we would be seeking to replace the principal who already demonstrates leadership and commitment and meets the overall needs of our students..

Mr. Thomason made a statement that he was outraged on how tonight's meeting was handled.

Ms. Durant a parent from Dallin School expressed her hopefulness and asked the School Committee members to have the same courage that the Ottoson Staff showed this evening and to ask Supt. Levenson to reconsider his discussion. Ms. Durant reminded the committee that the School Committee represents the parents and that the school committee is not representing the parents and the community appropriately.

On a motion by Ms. Fennelly seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted to adjourn

Vote 7 – 0 unanimous

ADJOURN at 11:20 p.m.

Submitted by

Karen Fitzgerald

Administrative Assistant